Local Government
Archives and Museums

Functional Analysis
&
Records Disposition Authority

Approved by the
Local Government
Records Commission
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Local Government Archives and Museums
Records Disposition Authority

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Functional and Organizational Analysis of Local Government Archives and Museums

Sources of Information

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Historical Context of Local Government Archives and Museums

Although each local government archives or museum in Alabama has its own unique history, this analysis will consider such institutions from a statewide perspective, citing individual examples to illustrate various points in the narrative. More detailed information will be provided on a few representative institutions. While it is recognized that many local archives or museums in Alabama are administered by historical and genealogical societies, private foundations, or other non-governmental entities (often on much the same basis as those responsible to local governments), records disposition requirements in this RDA are intended *only* for institutions that are official county or municipal agencies, receive regular funding from a county or municipality, or hold county or municipal records or artifacts. RDA functions and records disposition requirements are generally intended to apply to both archives and museums.

The proliferation of local preservation programs across Alabama, over the past quarter-century or so, may be attributed in part to a growing public fascination with historical and genealogical research. During the 1960s and '70s, widespread interest in the Civil War Centennial was followed by the enormous popularity of Alex Haley's *Roots*, in both televised and published versions. The resultant "crazes" were to some extent nationwide phenomena. However, in the South they fell upon especially fertile ground, for many Southerners were already amateur Civil War historians or genealogists. *Roots* also increased genealogical activity among African-Americans. During the following decades, Alabamians continued to occupy themselves in tracing family connections, looking up military service records, and collecting artifacts. They sought improved access to historical records in courthouses and city halls and worked to establish collections of local history and genealogy in public libraries. In a number of localities, cooperation among researchers, librarians, and local government officials laid the groundwork for well-developed preservation programs.

At the same time, federal and state authorities were also becoming more concerned with local records issues. Under the impetus of a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), Alabama conducted a statewide needs assessment report in 1985. It concluded that the condition of county and municipal records was “deplorable.” Fortunately, the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) was already moving to attack the problem. In its early years, the department had pursued a broad collecting policy and acquired a fair number of local government records (although it never, save for a brief period in the 1970s, followed North Carolina’s example of systematically removing them from courthouses and city halls). By the late 1980s, ADAH was compiling a centralized microfilm collection of local records and newspapers, concurrently offering records management assistance to Alabama counties and municipalities. As its support began to engender corresponding efforts at the local level (several counties and municipalities had by now created their own archives), ADAH could move even farther toward a decentralized approach.

In 1993, state resources were augmented by a large grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC): $300,000, plus a matching appropriation of $100,000 from the legislature. The Alabama Historical Records Advisory Board was able, under ADAH auspices, to offer financial aid to developing archives and records preservation programs. One projected county archives received $26,000 to assist in its inception, while three existing local archives obtained substantial grants for records reformatting or processing. Although federal funds expired within three years, ADAH continued to support and formalize relations with local archives. Between 1991 and 1998, the department obtained commission sanction of a Local Records Depository Agreement that allowed government agencies to store records at approved off-site depositories; solicited Standard Facilities Reports from local archives on their staffing, hours, holdings, and storage conditions; established procedures for returning local records in the ADAH collection (on recurring loan) to county or municipal archives that met appropriate criteria; and sponsored legislation to enable cooperative archival endeavors among localities or regions. Since 1997, Government Records Division staff members have met regularly with representatives of local archives (some of which also hold museum collections) at a “Local Archives Roundtable.” Besides providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, the roundtable reviews draft RDAs and publications before their consideration at the Local Government Records Commission’s quarterly meetings.

It is difficult to generalize about the origins of our state’s museums. Thomas Owen’s *History of Alabama* (1921) listed only six, including the collection of artifacts in Owen’s own department. However, preservation initiatives arose soon afterward in many Alabama cities, under the auspices of local scientists, artists, or historians who sometimes succeeded in attracting county or municipal support. Anniston established a natural history museum in 1930. By 1930 and 1951, respectively, the work of local artists was being shown in facilities owned by the cities of Montgomery and Birmingham. Municipal art museums later appeared in Mobile (1964), Gadsden (1966), and Fayette

(1969). The U.S. Bicentennial provided the impetus for developing municipal "living history" sites at Mobile's Fort Condé (1976) and Huntsville's Constitution Village (1982), although the Montgomery Landmarks Association had operated Old Alabama Town "for the City of Montgomery" since 1967. Other "living history" exhibits, such as the Pioneer Museum of Alabama (formerly the Pike Pioneer Museum), were founded as private, non-profit agencies and receive no local government funds. Elsewhere, museums arose from a desire to honor local figures of historical or literary merit, such as Helen Keller (Tuscumbia's Ivy Green, 1952) and Harper Lee (Monroeville's Old Courthouse Museum, 1963). Over the last 35 years, county historical societies, genealogical societies, and landmarks groups have established a variety of depot museums, local history museums, and archives; some are mentioned elsewhere in the text.

By 1978, Alabama boasted a sufficient number of museums to justify founding an Alabama Museums Association, "a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation" designed to assist museums in developing programs, training staff, maintaining cooperative relationships with other institutions, and promoting "the protection and preservation of objects, specimens, records, and sites significant to the natural, human, and cultural history of Alabama." Membership is open to state, local, university, and private museums, whatever the scope of their collections. ADAH staff members have participated in the association's work since its inception, offering advice and consulting service to individual museums and assisting in the compilation of an *Alabama Museum Directory.*

Other recent developments in the ADAH local records program bode well for the continuing success of local archives and museums. In 1998, the department joined the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) in a new phase of county records microfilming, obtaining local volunteers to unfold and flatten unbound estate files, Confederate pension applications, and other records prior to filming. Thus far, the program has enabled officials, historians, and genealogists to work productively together in almost 50 of Alabama's 67 counties. Frequently, project participants have moved on from "loose records" to other issues of local records management and preservation. Many counties have improved overall records storage conditions significantly as the result of their loose records projects, while several are now working toward establishing a county archives. In May 2001, the Alabama Probate Judges' Association (apparently inspired by ADAH initiatives) appointed a committee to study the extension of local archives programs.

The greatest barrier to continued progress in local records matters remains the inadequacy of state and local funds. Over the past two years, Government Records Division staff members have attempted to build upon loose records contacts and to publicize ongoing county and municipal records problems among the constituencies that hold state and local "purse strings." The goal of this campaign–enthusiastically endorsed by members of the Local Archives Roundtable–is to restore a state-funded grant program for local records preservation. Further success may depend upon how strongly these efforts are supported and how quickly they bear fruit.

Agency Organization

Due to their divergent origins, local government archives vary widely in administration, staffing, collections, and financing. Two of the earliest began as mere adjuncts of public libraries, although one of these (Birmingham's) now serves as the official city archives and the other (Ashville's) has progressed from a library "archives room" to an independent archives and museum, supported financially by both the city and the county. County historical societies played important roles in founding the Lawrence, Limestone, and Morgan County archives. Now, however, those archives are funded primarily by their county governments, hold county records, and operate (with more or less autonomy) as county agencies. All three have their own buildings and staff. Not so the Blount and Cullman County archives, which, as subsidiaries of the probate office or commission, occupy "archives rooms" inside the courthouse. The Mobile Municipal Archives has its own building but is under the administrative jurisdiction of the city clerk.

Local museums are even more of a "mixed bag" than local archives. Of the Alabama Museum Association's 179 members, fewer than 40 (if historical houses are excluded) may be classified as "local history" museums. Most of those belong to historical societies or to landmarks groups, are run by foundations, or are otherwise in private hands. (Some non-government museums receive discretionary funds from local government.) Only about a dozen museums in Alabama's hinterlands are government agencies, receive regular appropriations, or act as repositories for county or municipal records. However, all four of the state's large municipalities administer historical, scientific, or cultural museums that meet these criteria and are therefore covered by this RDA.

Collection policies of local archives and museums vary, but few restrict their holdings to local records and genealogical materials. Although primarily a research-oriented institution, the Morgan County Archives displays old maps and photographs. The Ashville Museum and Archives augments its county record holdings with exhibits of old clothing, books, and china. Along with (thus far unorganized) county records on its second floor, the Cherokee County Historical Museum features "housewares, tools, farm implements, books, documents, clothes, pictures, and furniture" from the county's past. Cullman County's archives boasts a fine model of the former courthouse. Depot museums in Enterprise, Huntsville, and Fort Payne display the artifacts of early Alabama railroads. Other local museum holdings (as listed in the *Alabama Museum Directory*) include: "slave-made furniture," "handmade quilts," "Indian artifacts," "fire-fighting equipment and mementos," "Coca-Cola memorabilia," "a typewriter from Hitler's 'Eagle's Nest,'" and "dolls." The Shelby County Museum and Archives did think to mention "old county records for genealogical research."

Most local archives have at least one trained archivist. As county or city employees, archivists may have other duties: one served for years as a part-time operator on the courthouse switchboard, while another was only recently permitted to retire from his "official" job as county engineer. The ADAH Government Records Division prepared a model job description for county archivists in 1996, but it is not mandatory and has not as yet been widely used. Staff qualifications for local history museums are likewise not standardized, but some directors have professional training as conservators or curators. A more consistent staffing factor is that nearly all local preservation programs rely heavily on volunteers. Even a large archives may have only three or four paid employees, including professional staff, clericals, technicians, and part-time maintenance support. Small archives or museums may have a paid director and half-a-dozen volunteers, who are usually recruited from historical or genealogical societies or provided by councils on the aging. Often, volunteers become knowledgeable and effective workers, allowing their facilities to operate quite happily with a largely unpaid work force. When heavy labor is required, local governments can usually lend maintenance staff or prison trusties to assist.

Some of Alabama's local archives enjoy their own excellent facilities, having successfully converted abandoned bank buildings (Lawrence and Morgan Counties), post offices (Limestone County), or former courthouses (Shelby County) into attractive and functional repositories. Others have adapted space in active courthouses (Ashville, Blount County, Cullman County, Mobile County Probate, Washington County) or in public libraries (Birmingham and Huntsville). The Mobile Municipal Archives occupies an ex-police station, while the Cherokee County Historical Museum is housed in what was (and still looks like) a 19th-century general store. When the Local Government Records Commission approved the use of records depository agreements in 1998, it established minimum structural and environmental requirements for off-site records depositories, based on those in a NAGARA publication. Though hardly stringent, those standards provide for adequate temperature and humidity controls; the use of archival containers and shelving; adequate staff and facilities for public access to records during hours in which government offices are open; and protection for records from pest infestation, theft, and natural disaster. To qualify as a depository, a local archives, museum, or other institution must fill out a Standard Facilities Report and pass periodic inspections by ADAH staff, initially before records are stored there and biannually thereafter.

Sketches of several representative institutions demonstrate that Alabama's local archives and museums have widely varying origins and play many different roles in their communities:

The **Birmingham Public Library's** Department of Archives and Manuscripts was established in 1976 and became the city's official archives in 1987. Its mission is "to preserve, collect, and make available public records, private papers, business records and other historic material relating to the . . . history of Birmingham, Jefferson County, and the surrounding areas of Alabama." Its collection "now exceeds 30,000,000 documents, 200,000 photographs, and numerous maps, drawings, blueprints, film, video and audio tapes, and works of art[. T]he Archives Department serves more than 1,200 researchers a year," many of whom "have made significant contributions to the study of the Civil Rights Movement and race relations, industrial and economic development in the South, the labor movement, women's history . . . church and religious history . . . architectural history, education, sports history, and the study of music and art." In addition, the department cooperates with the City of Birmingham's records management department and other agencies in acquiring archival records to document the work of city government.

The **Mobile Municipal Archives** began in 1973 as an effort by Mobile's board of commissioners "to gain control over [the city's] voluminous and deteriorating historical records." After a successful inventory project "brought all non-current municipal records into a central records facility, the archives opened to the public in September 1983." Housed initially at an old air force base, it moved to its current location (formerly the police department) in 1991. The municipal archives is staffed by an archivist, assistant archivist, records manager, and three assistants; administratively, it falls under the city clerk. As "the official repository for records of the City of Mobile," the archives is mandated "to accession, arrange, preserve, inventory, and make available to the public and to governmental officials all non-current records of the city." It also "operates a records management program which handles the current records of municipal departments," disposing of temporary records and accessioning permanent records into its historical collection. Finally, the archives "maintains a microfilming program, which films the most valuable and frequently used records in the collection for research and preservation purposes." Historical City of Mobile records at the archives date back to 1814.

Since 1991, the **Monroe County Heritage Museums'** mission has been "to bring people and history together" through "well-presented programs and exhibits" that foster an understanding of the region's heritage and "[enrich] lives." To this end, the museums operate three separate historical sites ("40 acres of land, 9 structures, one covered bridge and one outhouse") and offer a variety of exhibits and programs on Monroe County's past. At the Old Courthouse Museum, "visitors can stroll through the [1903] courtroom from which Monroeville author Harper Lee drew inspiration for her immortal work *To Kill a Mockingbird.*" Annually, the museums' theater troupe presents a two-act play based on the novel. Other sites include: Rikard's Mill (1845), which has displays of grist milling, blacksmithing, and cane syrup making, as well as old-time music festivals and a Living History Encampment; Bethany Baptist Church in Burnt Corn, Alabama, site of an historic Indian trail and the first battle of the Creek War (1813); and the River Heritage Museum, featuring "paleontology [and] Native American and riverboat exhibits depicting the river heritage of Monroe County." The museums also publish a newsletter and maintain a web site. All this is run by a professional staff of six (an executive director, two site directors, a sites manager, a curator of education, and an administrative assistant), augmented by "our wonderful museum volunteers," some of whom process genealogical collections at the Old Courthouse Museum. This museum also holds old county records, allowing the Monroe County Heritage Museums to fall within this RDA.

In 1930, a group of prominent Montgomery citizens and artists began showing local art at what is now Huntington College. Their success persuaded the Montgomery city council to provide a vacant school building for an "Alabama Society of Fine Arts"–the first municipal art museum in Alabama. Between 1930 and 1959, the museum was run by a board of trustees and funded primarily through memberships and private donations. During this period, its collection featured historical and archeological artifacts as well as art; it also operated an art school and a library. In 1960, the **Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts** became an official agency of city government and, in 1983, began receiving county funds as well. After an interim of sharing space with the Montgomery Public Library, the museum moved in 1988 to a magnificent 45,000-square-foot building in Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park. The new facility offers expanded gallery space, full climate control, a 3,500-volume research library, educational programs and tours, a café, a museum shop, and a 240-seat auditorium. With nine administrative departments and a staff of 52, the museum currently receives one-third of its funding from the city, one-third from the county, and the final third from private sources. Its operating budget for 1999-2000 was $3.45 million. Unlike most institutions covered by this RDA, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Art's only public record holdings are those documenting its own work. It falls under the RDA as an agency of local government.

The **Morgan County Archives** was founded in 1995, with the aid of money obtained under Alabama's federally-supported local records grant program. (Two NHPRC grants funded a consultant's visit and the first year of the new archivist's salary.) Concurrently, Morgan County was able to acquire "the 1927 Tennessee Valley Bank building" in historic Decatur, providing one of the best facilities of any local archives in the state. Now supported by a filing fee in the county probate office, the archives' holdings "total approximately 1500 cubic feet of archival and manuscript materials," including a wide variety of county government records, federal censuses, family and church histories, genealogical publications, and photographs. Photographs of the Scottsboro Boys' trial from the MCA's collection appeared in a Hollywood documentary nominated for one of last year's Academy Awards. As in Mobile, the archives "also serves as the primary records management agency" for its parent local government. Responsible to the county commission, it is staffed by a professional archivist and assistant, augmented by volunteers and workers employed through the area council on aging.

Agency Functions and Subfunctions

No state legislative mandate covers the specific work of local government archives and museums, although they may be subject to county or municipal authorizing legislation and to general state requirements concerning their funding, collections, or operation. Their primary responsibilities are to collect, manage, preserve, and provide access to the historical records, artifacts, and other items in their collections. They also help to educate the public in subjects related to their holdings. Such activities fall under the Public Services and Stewardship functions identified for Alabama local government. In the performance of these functions, local government archives and museums may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Acquiring and Accessioning Records or Artifacts.** Local archives and museum build their collections in various ways. Archivists or curators develop collection policies, identify records or artifacts that fall within those policies, and accession such materials into their collections. Acquiring and accessioning can include such tasks as appraising the monetary and collection value of proposed acquisitions, tracking shipments, maintaining registration paperwork, and deaccessioning unwanted items. (For museums, the "registration" process may include additional activities, such as insuring, that are listed here under other subfunctions.) Archivists may also appraise records of other county or municipal agencies, accepting those of historical value into long-term custody. Usually (under the kind of arrangement codified in a Local Government Records Depository Agreement), the archives assumes physical custody of the records, but legal custody remains with the originating office. Finally, many archives and museum's collections grow through the acceptance of unsolicited donations.

- **Arranging and Describing Holdings.** Archives or museum staff members arrange new acquisitions, describe their provenance and order, create catalog or bibliographical records for each artifact or record collection, and place them in proper containers for storage or display. All of these activities are completed according to professional archival or museum standards. Once materials are arranged and described, staff members create finding aids (container listings) to facilitate record use by researchers and exhibit use by museum personnel. Catalog or bibliographical information on collections may also appear in published exhibit catalogs, national bibliographical databases, newsletters, or on the agency's web site.

- **Preserving Collections.** This subfunction focuses on the long-term physical care and maintenance of archival and museum collections. In order to preserve valuable collection items, archivists and museum curators try to maintain adequate environmental and storage conditions for their holdings. They monitor the condition of items on display or in storage and routinely repair or restore individual collection items.

- **Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance.** Archives or museum staff members or volunteers assist patrons with access to archival collections, make artifact information available to historians or other researchers, and provide access to museum exhibits. They may also research reference inquiries for patrons, copy or photograph items in the collection, or perform other such services upon request. Some agencies maintain a non-permanent library of reference sources for use by researchers.

- **Storing and Disposing of Temporary Records.** Some local archives act as records managers for other county or municipal departments. They accept short-term records into temporary custody, maintain them for periods established in agency RDAs, retrieve records when requested, and (if permitted by the originating agency) eventually destroy the records under the Local Government Records Commission's approved procedures.

- **Developing Exhibits and Educational Programs.** Archivists and museum curators plan, design, and stage exhibits of records, artifacts, or other materials from their collections. Some exhibits may be permanent; others may focus on topics of transitory interest, rotate items in and out of the collection, or contain items borrowed from collections of other institutions. Besides their educational value, exhibits help the archives or museum to monitor the condition of collections, gratify donors whose items are exhibited, and bring agency goals and accomplishments to the attention of the public, as well as oversight and funding agencies. Archives and museums may also develop other educational programs and activities, such as historical plays or reinactments, tours, discussion groups, and lectures.

- **Conducting Community Outreach Activities.** This subfunction covers all activities that involve local archives or museums in mutually beneficial relationships with their communities. Agencies may try to enlist community support by operating gift shops, employing local volunteers as staff, sponsoring "friends" groups or foundations, fundraising, and otherwise drawing public attention to their programs.

- **Providing Security for Collections, Facilities, and the Public.** This function focuses on security and safety issues for ensuring that archival and museum collections are not stolen, lost or damaged by visitors or institutions to which they are loaned, or destroyed by natural or man-made disasters. In addition, agency staff members try to maintain the condition of their property and building(s) and to provide a safe, secure environment for patrons, staff, and volunteers.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the local archives or museum staff's work may include general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support its programmatic areas. For other agencies, financial and personnel administration may be performed by the parent county or municipality. Categories of this subfunction may include:

  Managing the agency. Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies, such as corresponding and communicating; scheduling; meeting; documenting policy and procedures; reporting; litigating; drafting, promoting, or tracking legislation; publicizing and providing information; managing records; and managing information systems and technology.

Managing finances. Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing a budget package, purchasing (requisition and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; assisting in the audit process; investing; and issuing bonds.

Managing human resources. Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees, such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, promoting, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; and disciplining.

Managing properties, facilities, and resources. Activities include: inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; constructing buildings and facilities, leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property owned by the agency; insuring property; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property, including vehicles.

Analysis of Record-Keeping Systems and Records Appraisal of Local Government Archives and Museums

Agency Record-Keeping Systems

Records of most local government archives and museums are generated on computer but stored primarily in paper format. Some of the larger ones maintain electronic databases of collections, while other archives or museums employ microfilm for off-site security copies of such collection items as county records and newspapers. Many of these agencies have internet access and e-mail.

Records Appraisal

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by local archives and museums: temporary records and permanent records.

I. Temporary Records. Temporary records should be held for what is considered to be their active life and disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by local archives and museums are discussed below.

- **Shelf Lists, Location Files, and Finding Aids (2.01).** These records provide a location index to all holdings in the agency's collection. They document the location of all holdings for insurance purposes and assist agency staff in conducting research and providing access. Information in these records may include the record or object's accession number and date, description, donor, provenance, exhibition history, and location tracking information. Frequently updated, these records have no administrative value after they are superseded.

- **Card Catalogs or Files (2.02).** These records consist of card catalogs or files that are retained for convenience or to document archives or museum holdings that were never catalogued electronically. Each card may contain an item's accession number, accession date; location; catalog number; catalog or bibliographical information; and information on its provenance, previous ownership, and appraised value. Card files that are not backed up on a database are maintained until the item is deaccessioned from the collection.

- **Environmental Monitoring and Control Records (3.03).** These records document the archives or museum's efforts to maintain a suitable environment for preserving materials in its collection. They may include readings from temperature and humidity monitoring or control equipment, statistics on environmental conditions in storage areas, and memoranda recommending corrective actions. Individual environmental records document temporary conditions, but comparing them over time may assist the agency in obtaining funds for needed improvements and in planning future space requirements.

- **Records Management Documentation for Other County or Municipal Agencies (5.01).** These records document the archives or museum's records management activities on behalf of other local government agencies that store temporary records at its facility. They include records inventories, finding aids, and databases; agency records disposition authorities (RDAs); records documenting agency reference and retrieval requests; and records destruction documentation. Destruction documentation (notices) have the longest retention: copies are kept five years unless returned to the agency. Originals are kept permanently at ADAH.

- **Volunteer Files (7.01).** These files document the agency's use of volunteers, who may serve as docents, assist patrons with research, catalog or process items, provide clerical assistance, work in gift shops, or perform other tasks for local government archives and museums. Volunteer files may include: lists of volunteers' names, addresses, and work assignments; documentation of training, receptions, field trips, and recognition programs (excluding financial records concerning these events); and files on individual volunteers. Volunteer files provide information for annual reports, budgets, and other permanent records; but they do not, in themselves, have long-term administrative value.

- **Security and Access Control Records (8.03).** These records document the archives' or museum's efforts to provide security for its collections, staff, and patrons by monitoring the admission of staff or visitors to public or restricted areas. They may include such items as: printouts recording the use of special access cards, sign-in sheets for individual visitors or tour groups, sign-out sheets for staff members taking temporary custody of collection items, inspection reports on collection items, alarm system log sheets, and records documenting security personnel's responses to alarms or emergencies.

Note: The disposition of various categories of short-term financial records and other records with the former requirement of "Retain 5 years after the end of the fiscal year" in which they were created was revised to "Retain 2 years following audit" at the Local Government Records Commission meeting of October 24, 2003. These changes are reflected in this RDA.

II. Permanent Records. The Government Records Division recommends the following records as permanent:

Acquiring and Accessioning Records and Artifacts

- **Collection Policies and Procedures (1.01).** These records provide ongoing documentation of the archives or museum's collection goals, acquisition policies, and accessioning/deaccessioning procedures. They may include policy statements, procedures manuals, and memoranda or correspondence relating to agency collection policies. The records provide essential documentation of the agency's development and changes in its collection policies and goals.

- **Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files (1.02).** These records describe items added to, or removed from, the agency's permanent collection. Besides providing a description of each item, these records document the reasons for accessioning or deaccessioning it. They are useful in proving ownership for legal or insurance purposes and in contacts with donors or members of the public.

- **Donor Files (1.03).** These records document gifts of collection items to the archives or museum. Also included are files relating to prospective donors and declined donations, but only files of actual donations (1.03a) are appraised as permanent. Information in donor files may include the names of donors, descriptions of donated items, reasons for the donations and their acceptance or rejection, conditions or restrictions on the gifts, and correspondence with donors or their families. Donor files are essential for establishing the provenance of donated items.

Arranging and Describing Holdings

- **Collection Inventories (2.04).** These records document periodic inventories of all items in the archives or museum's collection. They contain item descriptions, acquisition information, and item locations and provide proof of the agency's ownership of collection items.

- **Archival Control Files (2.05).** These records document all arrangement, description, cataloging, and preservation actions taken on a particular group or series of records. The files contain copies of transmittals, finding aids, bibliographical information, preservation activities, and location information. As a virtual "history-in-progress" of each item, these records provide essential documentation for the agency's archival collection.

- **Curatorial Objects Files (2.06).** These records document provenance, acquisition, identification, cataloging, maintenance, and repair work on objects or artifacts in local archival or museum collections. They also provide a visual description of each item and may contain photographs of objects.

Preserving Collections

Permanent documentation of preserving collections is reflected in annual reports and statistical information used in budget estimates.

Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance

Permanent documentation of public access to the agency and reference use of its collections is reflected in annual reports and statistical information used in budget estimates.

Storing and Disposing of Temporary Records

Records destruction documentation for local archives and museums, and their client agencies, is maintained permanently in the ADAH Government Records Division.

Developing Exhibits and Educational Programs

- **Exhibit Files (6.01).** These records document the planning, research, and creation or staging of exhibits at the archives or museum or as traveling exhibits. Information includes planning documentation, descriptions of items, catalogs, loan agreements for borrowed items, certificates of insurance, and shipping receipts. Only planning documentation and sample copies of the exhibit catalog (6.01a) are appraised as permanent.

- **Educational Program Administrative Files (6.02).** These records document educational programs (historical presentations, lectures, workshops, etc.) conducted by the archives or museum for special constituencies, other government agencies, or the community at large. Specific types of programs will vary widely among individual archives or museums. Again, planning documentation and narrative reports (6.02a) and publicity materials (6.02e) are appraised as permanent. These records document events of long-term historical interest and administrative value to the archives or museum.

Conducting Community Outreach Activities

- **Special Events/Fundraising Files (7.02).** These records document the planning and conduct of special events, fundraising campaigns, membership drives, and other development activities conducted by the archives or museum. The records may include planning documentation; financial records, lists of participants or attendees; calendars of events; publicity materials; and financial or narrative reports. Planning documentation and narrative reports (7.02a) and publicity materials (7.02e) are appraised as permanent. Documentation of individual financial donors is found under item 7.03 below. These records document events of long-term historical interest and administrative value to the archives or museum.

- **Financial Donation Files (7.03).** These records document monetary gifts to the archives or museum that result from fundraising, memorials, or tributes by private individuals or corporations. Also included are files relating to prospective donors and declined donations. Information in the records may include the names of donors, reasons for the donations and their acceptance or rejection, conditions or restrictions on the gifts, and correspondence with the donors and their families. Only files of actual donations (7.03a) are appraised as permanent. These records are essential for establishing the legality of financial donations. They also document collection policies and goals.

- **"Friends" Organization/Foundation Files (7.04).** These records document the activities of archives or museums' "friends" organizations, development foundations, or other sources of private support and funding. Agency staff members may assist such organizations as part of their official duties; and an archives or museum may keep copies of some of its organization's records for financial accountability or informational purposes. Records appraised as permanent are those that would be permanent for the agency itself: board minutes, administrative procedures and correspondence, recruitment and publicity files (samples) and audit reports. Such records provide important documentation of the agency's development policies and long-term goals.

Providing Security to Collections, Facilities, and the Public

- **Loan Files (8.01).** These records document temporary and permanent loans to and from the archives or museum. They provide documentation of the transaction and proof that loaned items were received and returned. Information available in these records includes the lender's and recipient's names and institutions, a description of the item(s) loaned, loan agreement forms (including conditions of the loan), and receipts. These records are essential documentation for legal and insurance purposes.

Administering Internal Operations–Managing the Agency

- **Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets (9.01).** These records are meeting and hearing minutes of the library, archives, or museum board, along with agendas and packet materials (budgets, work plans, reports, and other background information) reviewed by board members prior to meetings. They are essential for documenting the evolution of archives or museum policies and procedures as approved by the board.

- **Administrative Policies and Procedures (9.03).** These records provide essential documentation of a variety of issues in agency development, such as collection policies and goals; access, reference, and other patron concerns; censorship; financial planning, and relations with government or private agencies and archives or museum employees.

- **Administrative Correspondence (9.04).** These records include correspondence and related files of the archives or museum director, department and branch directors, or other administrative officers concerning agency policies and procedures, as well as broad questions of administration. They may also include correspondence with other agencies that oversee archives or museum operations. Administrative correspondence documents the impact of agency decision-makers on policy development.

- **Accreditation Files (9.06).** Some local archives and museums may seek accreditation from state or national, professional standard-setting organizations. These records document the process of applying for, and receiving, accreditation from professional standard-setting organizations. Information in the files may include a history of the agency; descriptions of its facilities, funding, staff, and programs; accreditation requirements from the standard-setting organization; correspondence between the agency and organization; and the agency's accreditation status. These records provide a history of the agency's development and may be required to document its accreditation status and the professional standards governing its work.

- **Historical and Publicity Files (9.07).** These records may include press releases, newsletters, scrapbooks, brochures, photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, speeches, and public service announcements designed to publicize events or programs at the archives or museum. They document the "public relations" aspects of archives or museum operations and, cumulatively, provide an ongoing history of its role in the community.

- **Annual Reports (9.08).** Archives or museums may create annual narrative and/or financial reports describing their activities during a calendar or fiscal year. Such reports provide summary documentation of agency functions, projects, and activities, as well as an ongoing history of archives or museum operations. They may be submitted to the "parent" local government, published, or retained for the agency's own use.

- **Web Sites (9.15).** Archives or museums may develop web sites for providing information on such matters as operating hours, collections, and policies; and for responding to patron research requests. The disposition statement calls for permanently maintaining a "snapshot" of the complete site as often as significant changes are made.

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Finances

- **Budgeting Records (10.01).** These records document preparing an agency budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance. Permanent items include copies of final annual budgets, as approved by the parent local government, and annual financial reports.

- **Audit Reports (10.02).** These records document the archives or museum's overall financial condition during each audit period. Agencies with a county affiliation are audited by the Examiners of Public Accounts; municipal archives or museums are audited (annually) by an independent public accountant.

- **General Ledgers (traditional, manually-generated ledgers) (10.03b).** These are the records of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting fees and other revenue, purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting. Originally, general ledgers were manually created and were appraised as permanent. These records and another financial summary, the detailed year-end trial balance, are now often electronically created. The RDA previously called for printing out a detailed year-end trial balance and retaining it permanently as a "snapshot" general ledger. Most local government computer systems, however, can produce financial summary documents at almost any time; so a year-end trial balance has no real long-term significance. Audit reports (10.02) and annual financial reports (10.01c) also provide permanent documentation of archives' and museums' financial practices. Electronically-generated general ledgers and year-end trial balances are therefore appraised here for 10-year retention. Because manually-generated general ledgers usually provide the only financial summaries for the years they cover, their disposiiton has been left as permanent.

- **Grant Project Files–Final narrative reports (10.07b).** These records document the agency's application for federal, state, or private funds to purchase items or materials, construct facilities, or carry out programs. Final narrative reports are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Human Resources

- **Employee Handbooks (11.04).** These records provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other policies and procedures. They offer "snapshot" documentation of the archives or museum's personnel policies. More detailed information is documented under Administrative Policies and Procedures (9.03).

- **Employee Newsletters (11.05).** Internal newsletters are created for archives or museum employees to communicate personnel policies, news of important events, and information on individual employees. They provide additional documentation of agency personnel policies over time.

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

- **Archives or Museum Construction and Renovation Files (12.01).** These files document the design, construction, repair, and renovation of agency buildings and other facilities. Included may be building specifications and floor plans, plans of proposed work, lists of materials, correspondence, memoranda, reports, blueprints, site plans, elevation details, and financial records. Plans, specifications, and blueprints provide important historical documentation of the agency's appearance over time, as well as necessary information for future renovations or construction.

Local Government Archives and Museums
Permanent Records List

Acquiring and Accessioning Records and Artifacts

1. Collection Policies and Procedures
2. Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files
3. Donor Files

Arranging and Describing Holdings

1. Collection Inventories
2. Archival Control Files
3. Curatorial Objects Files

Developing Exhibits and Educational Programs

1. Exhibit Files (planning documentation and sample catalogs)
2. Educational Program Administrative Files (planning documentation, final narrative reports, sample publicity materials)

Conducting Community Outreach Activities

1. Special Events/Fundraising Files (planning documentation, final narrative reports, sample publicity materials)
2. Financial Donation Files (donor files)
3. "Friends" Organization/Foundation Files (board meeting minutes, agendas,and packets; administrative policies and procedures; annual reports; administrative correspondence; sample recuitment and publicity files; audit reports)

Providing Security to Collections, Facilities, and the Public

1. Loan Files

Administering Internal Operations–Managing the Agency

1. Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets
2. Administrative Policies and Procedures
3. Administrative Correspondence
4. Accreditation Files
5. Historical or Publicity Files
6. Annual Reports
7. Web Sites (annual "snapshots")

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Finances

1. Budgeting Records (approved annual budgets)
2. Audit Reports
3. General Ledgers (traditional, bound general ledgers)
4. Grant Project Files (final narrative reports)

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Human Resources

1. Employee Handbooks
2. Employee Newsletters

Administering Internal Operations–Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

1. Archives or Museum Construction and Renovation Files (plans, specifications, and blueprints)

Local Government Archives and Museums Records Disposition Authority

This records disposition authority (RDA) is issued by the Local Government Records Commission under authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-13-5 and 41-13-22 through -24. It was compiled by the Government Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of local government archives and museums. The RDA lists records created and maintained by local government archives and museums in carrying out their mandated function and subfunctions. It establishes retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for agencies to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their office. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successors in office and made available to members of the public. Records must also be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334)242-4452.

Note: Records disposition requirements in this RDA are mandatory *only* for local archives and museums that are officially designated as county or municipal agencies, receive regular appropriations (as opposed to occasional discretionary funds) from a county or municipal government, or hold county or municipal records or artifacts in their collections. Private archives and museums are welcome to use the RDA as a guide for records disposition, but such agencies do not fall under the Local Government Records Commission's authority and are not obligated by the records retention requirements and destruction procedures the RDA sets forth.

Explanation of Records Requirements

- This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition information governing the retention of local archives' or museums' records. Previous versions of this RDA are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.

- This RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records of local government archives and museums. It does not require the creation of any record not normally created in the conduct of business, although the creation of certain records may be required by administrative procedures, work responsibilities, audit requirements, or legislative mandates. Individual agencies may not necessarily create all of the records listed below.

- This RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.

- Some temporary records listed within the Administering Internal Operations subfunction of this RDA represent duplicate copies of long-term or permanent records maintained by other agencies.

- Certain records and record-related materials need not be retained as records under the disposition requirements in this RDA. Such materials include: (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document government activities; (3) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus printed materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term, internal purposes that may include, but are not limited to: telephone call-back messages; drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value; copies of materials sent for informational purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business; and internal communications about social activities. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction.

Records Disposition Requirements

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunction and lists records created and/or maintained by local government archives and museums in carrying out those subfunctions. An agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements, or to create requirements for additional records, to the Local Government Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

1. Acquiring and Accessioning Records and Artifacts

No.	Record Title	Disposition
1.01	**Collection Policies and Procedures.** These records provide ongoing documentation of the archives or museum's collection goals, acquisition policies, and accessioning/deaccessioning procedures. They may include policy statements, procedures manuals, and memoranda or correspondence relating to agency collection policies.	**PERMANENT**
1.02	**Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files.** These records describe items added to, or removed from, the agency's permanent collection. Besides providing a description of each item, these records document the reasons for accessioning or deaccessioning it. They do not include financial documentation, such as purchase orders.	**PERMANENT**

No.	Record Title	Disposition
1.03	**Donor Files.** These records document gifts of collection items to the archives or museum. Also included are files relating to prospective donors and declined donations. Information in donor files may include the names of donors, descriptions of donated items, reasons for the donations and their acceptance or rejection, conditions or restrictions on gifts, and correspondence with donors or their families. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **Donation files** (files of donated items)	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Files of potential donations** (“lead files”)	
	i. **Files that result in donations**	Transfer to donor files.
	ii. **Other files**	Retain for useful life.
	c. **Files of declined donations**	Retain 5 years after last contact with potential donor.
1.04	**Local Government Records Deposit Agreements.** These records are formal agreements executed between the archives or museum and other local government agencies for the archives or museum to accept physical custody of public records that are still legally in the custody of the donating agency. They include a list of all deposited items. (Note: Deposit agreements must be approved by the Local Government Records Commission. For information, contact ADAH.)	Retain 10 years after termination of the agreement.

2. Arranging and Describing Holdings

No.	Record Title	Disposition
2.01	**Shelf Lists, Location Files, and Finding Aids.** These records provide a location index to all holdings in the agency's collection. They document the location of all holdings for insurance purposes and assist agency staff in conducting research and providing access. Information in these records may include the record or object's accession number and date, description, donor, provenance, exhibition history, and location tracking information.	Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
2.02	**Card Catalogs or Files.** These records consist of card catalogs or files that are retained for convenience or to document archives or museum holdings that were never catalogued electronically. Each card may contain an item's accession number; accession date; location; catalog number; catalog or bibliographical information; and information on its provenance, previous ownership, and appraised value. Disposition is as follows:	
	a. Card files for items catalogued electronically	Retain until verification of all data in cataloging database. Once data has been verified, retain card files for useful life.
	b. Card files for items not catalogued electronically	Retain until item is deaccessioned.
2.03	**Cataloging Worksheets and Databases.** These records document the cataloging of archives or museum holdings in MARC or other standard cataloging formats. The records may include data entry worksheets and databases of holdings. Disposition is as follows:	
	a. Data entry worksheets	Retain until verification of data in cataloging database.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
2.03	**b. Databases of collections**	Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
2.04	**Collection Inventories.** These records document periodic inventories of all items in the archives or museum's collection. They may contain item descriptions, acquisition information, and item locations and provide proof of the agency's ownership of collection items.	**PERMANENT**
2.05	**Archival Control Files.** These records document all arrangement, description, cataloging, and preservation actions taken on a particular group or series of records. The files contain copies of transmittals, finding aids, bibliographical information, preservation activities, and location information.	**PERMANENT**
2.06	**Curatorial Objects Files.** These records document provenance, acquisition, identification, cataloging, maintenance, and repair work on objects or artifacts in local archival or museum collections. They also provide a visual description of each item and may contain photographs of objects.	**PERMANENT**

3. Preserving Collections

No.	Record Title	Disposition
3.01	**Conservation Files.** These records document routine maintenance and repair work on records or other collection items. They are primarily activity reports. Detailed information on the conservation of particular items or artifacts is filed in curatorial object files (2.06 above).	Retain for useful life.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
3.02	**Environmental Monitoring and Control Records.** These records document the archives or museum's efforts to maintain a suitable environment for preserving materials in its collection. They may include readings from temperature and humidity monitoring or control equipment, statistics on environmental conditions in storage areas, and memoranda recommending corrective actions.	Retain for useful life.

4. Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance

No.	Record Title	Disposition
4.01	**Attendance Logs, Statistics, and Reports.** These records document routine public usage of the archives or museum and attendance at special activities or functions. They are used to monitor patron and visitor trends, assess the success of programs and exhibits, and identify patrons who had access to facilities and collections. Attendance records may also used in preparing reports to oversight and funding agencies.	Retain for useful life.
4.02	**Reference Logs, Statistics, and Reports.** These records document reference use of archives or museum collections or staff assistance to patrons making reference inquiries. They are used to monitor patterns in patron use of collections and in preparing reports to oversight and funding agencies.	Retain for useful life.
4.03	**Researcher Registration Files.** These records are created to document the types and numbers of researchers using archival records or museum collections. Information available may include researchers' names and addresses, driver's license numbers, assigned researcher numbers, and types of research being conducted. Files may also contain information about specific collections used by researchers.	Retain 15 years.
4.04	**Reference Correspondence.** These records contain letters to the archives or museum asking specific research questions and copies of staff members' responses to researchers.	Retain 3 years.

5. Storing and Disposing of Temporary Records

No.	Record Title	Disposition
5.01	**Records Management Documentation for Other County or Municipal Agencies.** These records document the archives or museum's records management activities on behalf of other local government agencies that store temporary records at its facility. They include records inventories, finding aids, and databases; agency records disposition authorities (RDAs); records documenting agency reference and retrieval requests; and records destruction documentation. Disposition of these records is as follows:	
	a. **Inventories, finding aids, and databases of other agencies' records**	Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
	b. **Records disposition authorities (RDAs) for other agencies**	Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
	c. **Records documenting agency reference and retrieval requests** (logs, statistics, and reports)	Retain for useful life.
	d. **Records destruction documentation** (agency destruction requests submitted to and acknowledged by ADAH)	Return to originating agency or retain 2 years following the audit after the destruction notice was acknowledged.

6. Developing Exhibits and Educational Programs

No.	Record Title	Disposition
6.01	**Exhibit Files.** These records document the planning, research, and creation or staging of exhibits at side the archives or museum or as traveling exhibits. Information includes planning documentation, descriptions of items, catalogs, loan agreements for borrowed items, certificates of insurance, and shipping receipts. Records disposition is as follows:	

No.	Record Title	Disposition
6.01	a. **Planning documentation, exhibit catalog** (sample)	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Loan agreements, certificates of insurance** (borrowed items)	Retain 10 years after return of borrowed item.
	c. **Correspondence, shipping receipts, and other routine financial records**	See sections 9 and 10 of the RDA.
6.02	**Educational Program Administrative Files.** These records document educational programs (historical presentations, lectures, workshops, etc.) conducted by the archives or museum for special constituencies, other government agencies, or the community at large. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **Planning documentation and final narrative reports**	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Financial reports and routine financial records.** See section 10 of the RDA for further definition of financial records.	Retain 2 years following audit.
	c. **Lists of invitees, participants, or attendees**	Retain until completion of final narrative report.
	d. **Program evaluation forms**	Retain until completion of final narrative report.
	e. **Publicity materials** (sample copies)	**PERMANENT**

7. Conducting Community Outreach Activities

No.	Record Title	Disposition
7.01	**Volunteer Files.** These files document the agency's use of volunteers, who may serve as docents, assist patrons with research, catalog or process items, provide clerical assistance, work in gift shops, or perform other tasks for local government archives and museums. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **General volunteer program files** (e.g., lists of volunteer names, addresses, and work assignments; documentation of volunteer training, receptions, recognition programs, and field trips)	Retain for useful life.
	b. **Files on individual volunteers** (work histories)	Retain 6 years after last contact.
	Note: For financial records documenting volunteer events, see section 10.	
7.02	**Special Events/Fundraising Files.** These records document the planning and conduct of special events, fundraising campaigns, membership drives, and other development activities conducted by the archives or museum. The records may include planning documentation; financial records, lists of participants or attendees; calendars of events; publicity materials; and financial or narrative reports. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **Planning documentation and final narrative reports**	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Financial reports and routine financial records.** See section 10 of the RDA for further definition of financial records.	Retain 2 years following audit.
	c. **Lists of invitees, participants, or attendees**	Retain until completion of final narrative report.
	d. **Publicity materials** (sample copies)	**PERMANENT**

No.	Record Title	Disposition
7.03	**Financial Donation Files.** These records document monetary gifts to the archives or museum that result from fundraising, memorials, or tributes by private individuals or corporations. Also included are files relating to prospective donors and declined donations. Information in the records may include the names of donors, reasons for the donations and their acceptance or rejection, conditions or restrictions on the gifts, and correspondence with the donors and their families. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **Donors files** (files of financial donations)	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Files of potential donations** (“lead files”)	
	i. **Files that result in financial donations**	Transfer to donor files.
	ii. **Other files**	Retain for useful life.
	c. **Files of declined financial donations**	Retain 5 years after last contact with potential donor.
7.04	**“Friends” Organization/Foundation Files.** These records document the activities of archives or museums’ “ friends” organizations, development foundations, or other sources of private funding and support. Records listed here include those that may be kept (as copies) by the agency itself. Disposition of the records is as follows:	
	a. **Board Meeting Minutes, Agendas, and Packets; Administrative Policies and Procedures; Annual Reports; Administrative Correspondence; Recruitment and Publicity Files** (sample copies)	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Membership lists; mailing lists; telephone logs**	Retain for useful life.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
7.04	c. **Routine Correspondence; Routine Accounting/Purchasing Records** (see section 10 of the RDA)	Retain 2 years following audit.
	d. **Audit Reports**	**PERMANENT**
7.05	**Gift Shop Annual Inventories.** These records annual inventories of merchandise in the archives or museum's gift shop, including types and quantities of items purchased and sold. (Note: For other financial records of gift shops, consult section 11 of the RDA.)	Retain 2 years following audit.

8. Providing Security to Collections, Facilities, and the Public

No.	Record Title	Disposition
8.01	**Loan Files.** These records document temporary and permanent loans to and from the archives or museum. They provide documentation of the transaction and proof that loaned items were received and returned. Information available in these records includes the lender's and recipient's names and institutions, facilities reports from other institutions, a description of the item(s) loaned, loan agreement forms (including conditions of the loan), and receipts.	**PERMANENT**
8.02	**Insurance Policies on Collection Items.** These records document insurance coverage of valuable items in the archives or museum's collection. Information in the policy includes the name of the insuring company, a description of the item insured, amount of coverage and terms of the policy.	Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the policy lapsed or the item was deaccessioned.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
8.03	**Security and Access Control Records.** These records document the archives' or museum's efforts to provide security for its collections, staff, and patrons by monitoring the admission of staff or visitors to public or restricted areas. They may include such items as: printouts recording the use of special access cards, sign-in sheets for individual visitors or tour groups, sign-out sheets for staff members taking temporary custody of collection items, inspection reports on collection items, alarm system log sheets, and records documenting security personnel's responses to alarms or emergencies.	
	a. **Visitor/staff logs and sign-in sheets/security card print-outs**	Retain 1 year.
	b. **Property pass files** (sign-out sheets, receipts, etc.)	Retain 1 year after property's return.
	c. **Guards' inspection reports of collections/artifacts**	Retain 2 years.
	d. **Electronic security system log sheets**	Retain 3 years
	e. **Security/emergency response records**	Retain 10 years after final settlement of any claims due.
8.04	**Disaster Planning/Recovery Documentation.** These records document emergency procedures for restoring agency operations and protecting vital collections and records in case of natural disasters or other emergencies. Information in the disaster plan may include: lists of vital records and equipment, locations of back-up record copies and emergency supplies, contact numbers for emergency assistance agencies, names and telephone numbers of disaster recovery team members, and disaster response and recovery procedures.	Retain until superseded. Duplicate the current plan and disperse off-site copies among disaster recovery team members.

9. Administering Internal Operations–Managing the Agency

No.	Record Title	Disposition
9.01	**Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets.** These records are meeting and hearing minutes of the library, archives, or museum board, along with agendas and packet materials (budgets, work plans, reports, and other background information) reviewed by board members prior to meetings. They document the evolution of archives or museum policies and procedures as approved by the board.	**PERMANENT**
9.02	**Recordings of Board Meetings.** Audio or video recordings provide a verbatim account of discussion at library, archives, or museum board meetings. They are normally used only as an aid to preparation of the minutes.	Retain until minutes are approved.
9.03	**Administrative Policies and Procedures.** These records provide essential documentation of a variety of issues in agency development, such as collection policies and goals; access, reference, and other patron concerns; censorship; financial planning, and relations with government or private agencies and archives or museum employees.	**PERMANENT**
9.04	**Administrative Correspondence.** These records include correspondence and related files of the archives or museum director, department and branch directors, or other administrative officers concerning agency policies and procedures, as well as broad questions of administration. They may also include correspondence with other agencies that oversee archives or museum operations.	**PERMANENT**
9.05	**Administrative Reference Files.** These records include materials, not created by the archives or museum, that are collected and used only as reference sources of information.	Retain for useful life.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
9.06	**Accreditation Files.** These records document the process of applying for, and receiving, accreditation from state or national professional standard-setting organizations. Information in the files may include a history of the agency; descriptions of its facilities, funding, staff, and programs; accreditation requirements from the standard-setting organization; correspondence between the agency and organization; and the agency's accreditation status.	**PERMANENT**
9.07	**Historical and Publicity Files.** These records may include press releases, newsletters, scrapbooks, brochures, photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, speeches, and public service announcements designed to publicize events or programs at the archives or museum.	**PERMANENT**
9.08	**Annual Reports.** Archives or museums may create annual narrative and/or financial reports describing their activities during a calendar or fiscal year. Such reports provide summary documentation of agency functions, projects, and activities, as well as an ongoing history of archives or museum operations.	**PERMANENT**
9.09	**Routine Correspondence.** This type of correspondence documents the daily conduct of archives or museum operations in contacts with patrons, other governmental agencies, local organizations or businesses, and the general public. Routine correspondence relates to such "everyday" matters as answering inquiries and providing information, rather than to agency policy development or issues of long-term administrative impact.	Retain 2 years following audit.
9.10	**Legal Case Files.** These records document lawsuits filed against the local archives or museum.	Retain 6 years after the case is closed.
9.11	**Mailing Lists.** These records include various standard lists of names and addresses used by agency staff members.	Retain for useful life.
9.12	**Telephone Logs and Fax Machine Logs.** These records are lists of telephone and fax machine contacts and related data.	Retain for useful life.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
9.13	**Calendars.** These records include desk calendars and other scheduling devices for agency personnel.	Retain 1 year.
9.14	**Records Management Documentation**	
	a. **Records documenting implementation of the agency's approved RDA.** These records include records management plans, records inventories, records finding aids, and records destruction notices.	Retain 2 years following audit.
	b. **Copy of Approved RDA.** The RDA provides legal guidelines for the disposition of all agency records. The archives or museum should maintain a signed copy of its RDA and may disperse duplicate copies as needed.	Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the RDA was superseded.
9.15	**Websites.** Archives or museums may develop web sites for providing information on such matters as operating hours, collections, and policies; and for responding to patron research requests.	**PERMANENT** Preserve a complete copy of the website annually, or as often as significant changes are made.
9.16	**Computer Systems Documentation.** These files include hardware and software manuals and diskettes, warranties, and Y2K records. Disposition: Retain former system documentation 2 years after the audit period in which the former hardware and software no longer exist anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system.	

10. Administering Internal Operations–Managing Finances

No.	Record Title	Disposition
10.01	**Budgeting Records.** These records document preparing an agency budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance.	
	a. **Approved annual budgets.** These are final archives or museum budgets as approved by the county commission or municipal council.	**PERMANENT**
	b. **Records documenting budget performance during the budget cycle** (budgeted and actual revenue reports, revenue reports, investment reports, expenditure reports, encumbrance reports, etc.)	Retain 2 years following audit.
	c. **Annual financial reports**	**PERMANENT**
10.02	**Audit Reports.** These records document the archives or museum's overall financial condition during each audit period.	**PERMANENT**
10.03	**Accounting Records**	
	a. **Routine accounting records.** These are records of original entry for routine accounting transactions, such as lists of fees collected, journals, registers, ledgers, receipts, bank statements, deposit slips, canceled checks, etc.	Retain 2 years following audit.
	b. **General ledgers (traditional, manually-generated ledgers).** These are records of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting fees and other revenue, purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting.	**PERMANENT**
	c. **Electronically-generated genderal ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances**	Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
10.04	**Purchasing Records.** These records document the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products.	Retain 2 years following audit.
10.05	**Contracts, Leases, and Agreements.** These records document the negotiation, fulfillment, and termination of all contracts, leases, and agreements entered into by the archives or museum, including final contracts that are subject to the bid process.	Retain 10 years after expiration of the contract (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 6-2-33).
10.06	**Records of Formal Bids.** These records document the bid process, including the agency's requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses from service vendors.	Retain 7 years after the date bids were opened (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-16-62).
10.07	**Grant Project Files.** These records document the agency's application for federal, state, or private funds to purchase items or materials, construct facilities, or carry out programs. They also document the conduct of grant projects and the expenditure of funds, and may include correspondence with the granting agency or parent local government.	
	a. **Financial records, interim reports, and supporting documentation.** These records include background materials, interim narrative reports, financial reports, correspondence, and other supporting documentation for the expenditure of grant funds awarded. Also included are records relating to unsuccessful applications.	Retain 6 years after submission of final financial report or denial of application.
	b. **Final narrative reports.** Final narrative reports are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.	**PERMANENT**

No.	Record Title	Disposition
10.08	**Travel Records.** These records document requests by agency personnel for authorization to travel on official business, and related materials such as travel reimbursement, forms and itineraries.	Retain 2 years following audit.

11. Administering Internal Operations–Managing Human Resources

No.	Record Title	Disposition
11.01	**Position Classification Files.** These files document job classifications and pay rates for all positions covered by the agency's personnel system. They comprise reports, job classification lists, and pay plans. Information available includes department, job title, pay rate, and step increase scale for each pay rate.	Retain 4 years after position is reclassified.
11.02	**Job Recruitment Materials.** These records document efforts by the archives or museum to advertise positions and attract qualified personnel.	Retain 2 years following audit.
11.03	**Employment Applications.** These are applications by individuals for employment in agency positions.	
	a. **Successful applications**	Retain in employee personnel file.
	b. **Unsuccessful applications**	Retain 3 years.
11.04	**Employee Handbooks.** These records provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other policies and procedures.	**PERMANENT**
11.05	**Employee Newsletters.** Internal newsletters are created for archives or museum employees to communicate personnel policies, news of important events, and information on individual employees.	**PERMANENT**

No.	Record Title	Disposition
11.06	**Employee Personnel Files.** These records document each agency employee's work history; they are generally maintained as case files. A file may include information on an employee's training, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, promotions and demotions, and awards.	Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
11.07	**Employee Work Schedules.** These records document the daily and weekly work schedules of all agency employees.	Retain 2 years following audit.
11.08	**Leave and Attendance Records.** These records document the attendance and leave status of agency personnel, both generally and for individual employees.	
	a. **Individual employee leave and attendance records (including time sheets).** These are records documenting hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken by individual employees.	Retain 2 years following audit.
	b. **Employee cumulative leave/attendance records.** These records document the final leave status (cumulative leave) of individual employees.	Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
	c. **Employee sick leave donation records.** These records document the donation of sick leave to their colleagues by employees.	Retain 2 years following audit.
11.09	**Payroll Records.** These records document library payrolls, as well as pay status and payroll deductions for individual employees.	
	a. **Annual payroll earnings reports/records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes.** These are summaries of employees' earnings during a fiscal year, including all deductions and federal Form 941.	Retain 50 years after the end of the tax year in which the records were created.
	b. **Records documenting agency payrolls.** These records include pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers, payroll action forms, payroll/overtime certification reports, etc.	Retain 2 years following audit.

No.		Record Title	Disposition
11.09	c.	**Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations.** These records document payroll deductions for taxes (including W-2 forms), retirement and insurance contributions, and all other deductions withheld from the pay of individual employees.	Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
	d.	**Employee "cafeteria plan" (flexible benefits) records.** These records document salary-reduction type plans authorized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Section 125.	
		General information about the plan	Retain until superseded.
		Employee applications, correspondence, enrollment cards and files	Retain 6 years after termination of the plan.
11.10		**Employee Insurance Program Enrollment and Claims Files.** These files document the library's efforts to assist employees and their dependents to enroll in health/life insurance programs.	
	a.	**General information on the program**	Retain until superseded.
	b.	**Employee applications, correspondence, and enrollment cards and files**	Retain 4 years after program termination or employee separation.
	c.	**Employee claims files**	Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the claim was filed.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
11.11	**Workmen's Compensation Insurance Claim Files.** These files document all claims pertaining to work-related injuries or diseases made by agency employees. (See Code of Alabama 1975, Section 25-5-4.)	Retain 12 years and after the end of the fiscal year in which the transaction occurred.
11.12	**Unemployment Compensation Files.** These files provide documentation related to employee claims for unemployment compensation.	Retain 2 years following the audit period in which the transaction occurred.
11.13	**Training Records.** These records document the agency's provision of in-service training and professional development for its employees, including workshop records and evaluations.	Retain 3 years.

12. Administering Internal Operations–Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources

No.	Record Title	Disposition
12.01	**Archives or Museum Construction and Renovation Files.** These files document the design, construction, repair, and renovation of agency buildings and other facilities. Included may be building specifications and floor plans, plans of proposed work, lists of materials, correspondence, memoranda, reports, blueprints, site plans, elevation details, and financial records. Disposition is as follows:	
	a. Plans, specifications, and blueprints	**PERMANENT**
	b. All other records	Retain for life of building.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
12.02	**Space Management Plans/Records of Space Assignments.** These records document the assignment of office space in agency buildings and facilities. They include operating plans for the assignment of such space.	Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
12.03	**Annual Inventory Records.** These records document all personal property, equipment, or capital outlay by the archives or museum on an annual basis.	Retain 2 years following audit.
12.04	**Receipts of Responsibility for Property.** These records document the temporary use or possession of the agency's property by its employees.	Retain until return of item to property manager.
12.05	**Facilities/Building Maintenance Work Orders.** These records document routine maintenance activities in agency buildings and facilities.	Retain 1 year.
12.06	**Facilities/Building Inspection Records.** These records document the routine safety and maintenance inspection of agency buildings and facilities, and such potentially dangerous items as furnaces, elevators, electronic doors, etc.	Retain 5 years.
12.07	**Motor Pool Use Records.** These records document the use of motor pool vehicles by agency employees.	Retain 2 years following audit.
12.08	**Parking Records.** These records document the use of agency parking facilities by employees or visitors. They may include parking permits, cards, and applications for these items.	Retain 2 years following audit.
12.09	**Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Files.** These records document the maintenance of all vehicles and other equipment owned or maintained by the archives or museum.	Retain 2 years following audit.

No.	Record Title	Disposition
12.10	**Long-Distance Telephone Logs.** These records document use of the agency's long-distance telephone systems by employees during business hours.	Retain 2 years following audit.

Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority

Under the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-13-23, "no county, municipal, or other local government official, shall cause any . . . record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the local government records commission." This RDA constitutes authorization by the Local Government Records Commission to dispose of records as stipulated, with the condition that the responsible official must submit a Local Government Records Destruction Notice to the ADAH Government Records Division to document the destruction. The ADAH, which serves as the commission's staff, retains local records destruction documentation as a permanent record. (For more information, see the ADAH procedural leaflet "Records Destruction Procedures for Local Governments.")

In addition to authorizing a procedure for legally destroying temporary records, the Local Government Records Commission urges the local government archives or museum to establish a recordkeeping program in order to meet its legal and public service needs. Such a program should include the following activities:

- The agency director, or a designated records officer, should establish a records management liaison in each archives or museum department. The records officer and liaisons should be responsible for ensuring the regular implementation of this RDA, maintaining records in compliance with national and state standards, and coordinating the destruction to disposable records.

- Permanent records in the archives or museum's custody will be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation. In addition to records appraised as permanent in the RDA, the Local Government Records has classified all records created prior to 1900 as permanent.

- Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis–for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA's provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the state Sunset Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.

- The archives or museum should maintain full documentation of any computerized recordkeeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records' preservation and accessibility for the period legally required.

- Microforms of permanent records should conform to quality standards set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Associatio for Image and Information Management (AIIM). According to the Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-13-44, no microfilmed record may be legally destroyed "until the microfilm copy has been processed and checked with the original for accuracy." Government Records Division staff may examine agency microfilm for compliance prior to destruction of the original records.

- ■ The archives or museum should notify the ADAH Government Records Division of any significant changes in its records storage conditions or records management procedures. It may also contact the division to request revision of its RDA. Normally, RDA revisions will be submitted to the Local Government Records Commission every two years. ADAH Government Records Division staff will notify the agency of any commission-approved changes in record-keeping requirements that affect all local government archives or museums.

The staff of the Local Government Records Commission may examine the condition of permanent records maintained in the agency's custody and inspect records destruction documentation. Government Records Division archivists are available to instruct agency staff in RDA implementation or otherwise assist the agency in implementing its records management program.

The Local Government Records Commission adopted this revised Records Disposition Authority on October 24, 2003.

By:____Date:______________________
Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman, by Tracey Berezansky

By:____Date:______________________
Director
_______________________ Archives or Museum